intercom

Journal of the Air Force C4ISR community ★ July 2006

IM OVERVIEW ★ GETTING A JUMP START ★ JEFX SUCCESS

EMERGENCY RESPONSE ★ WRITING WELL ★ POSTAL

THE FUTURE OF CLIENT SUPPORT ★ SKILL TRAINING

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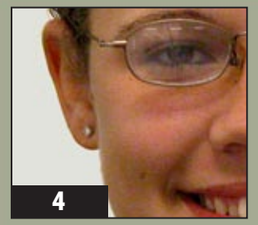
SITEMAP

JULY 2006 ★ VOLUME 47, NUMBER 7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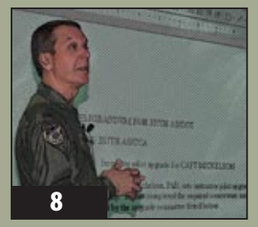
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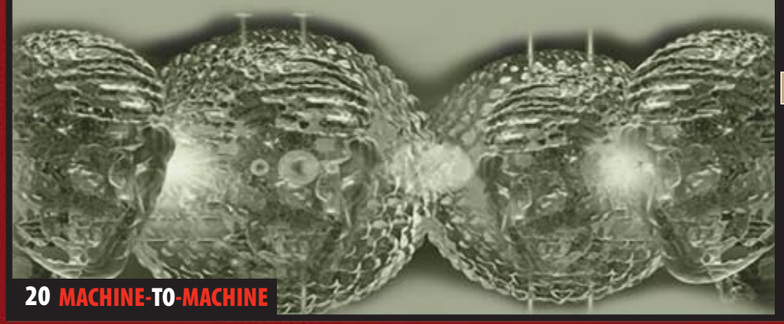
Cover art by: Karen Petitt

OVER VIEW

THE THEME

COMM OPS


20 MACHINE-TO-MACHINE

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MAGAZINE AWARDS

2005
Best Magazine
DoD's Thomas Jefferson Awards program & Air Force Media Contest

2003/2004
Most Improved Magazine
Clarion Award * Women in Communications

Award of Excellence - Internal Magazine
NAGC Blue Pencil Competition

Best Online Newspaper
Air Force Media Contest

Best Designed Publication
DoD's MILGRAPH Competition

FROM THE EDITORIAL DESK

A chameleon in disguise

IMers can always adapt to changing mission

By Jim Verchio
Editor

AS KAREN AND I WERE brainstorming on how to present this issue, we were having some trouble identifying exactly what it is an information manager does from day-to-day.

After 20 years of serving in the Air Force, we're not completely ignorant to the IM mission, but on the other hand, it's hard to pinpoint all the intricacies of this ever-changing animal.

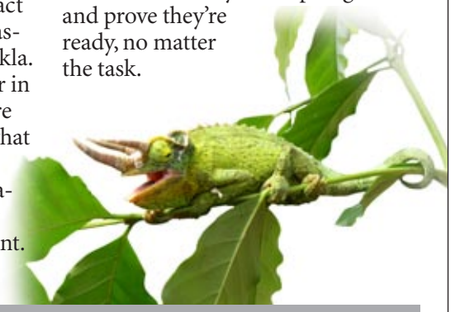
When we joined, the IMer was known as a "702." I remember talking to the squadron "702" when I needed a leave form typed out, or I needed to update the recall roster or file some paperwork. Boy, those days have changed.

To get updated on an IMer's exact duties, I called my good friend Master Sgt. Tom Flagg at Altus AFB, Okla. He's been an information manager in some form or another for his entire career, and he cleared up for me what an IMer brings to the fight.

He said an IM specialist is a chameleon. This person can instantly change to adapt to any environment. In the deployed environment, the IMer is sometimes tasked to be the commander's executive officer, or be tasked to do a deployed newsletter. The IMer is always expected to be a computer guru, and in many cases even develops software to help track items such as performance reports and awards programs.

As you look through these pages, you'll see that Sergeant Flagg is right on point when he describes the IMer as a chameleon. These Airmen are computer administrators, records managers, training experts and even postal specialists.

Of course in the future IMers will be asked to do more with less because of force-shaping initiatives. However, if Sergeant Flagg's dedication and professionalism are any indicator of how IMers will weather the storm, I'm confident they'll "adapt" again and prove they're ready, no matter the task.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Appreciate the hard work

Thanks for publishing such a wonderful periodical. I enjoy getting my e-mail subscription and seeing what is happening in the comm and ops world. I come from both. Being a former superintendent of a command post and now an Information Manager in an aerial port squadron, I like seeing all sides of the communications spectrum, whether we are working in Honduras, Alaska, the Far East or in the desert. Thanks for putting this out, and thanks to the *intercom* staff for all the hard work!

—Tech. Sgt. Jerry W. Pitts
Information Management Craftsman
Little Rock AFB, Ark.

Not too 'artsy'

The *intercom* is presented in such a beautiful way without too much "artsy" stuff to detract from what is essentially a literary magazine. Well done!

—Bill Blakfield

JAG IN A BOX

Chain letters prohibited

Are chain e-mails really prohibited, and by forwarding one, could we be subject to punitive action?

Yes. Even though they are an almost daily occurrence, AFI 33-119 clearly states they are not allowed.

Within the past month or so, the infamous "Beermail" made the rounds, embarrassing both enlisted and officer alike; many of those included in the forwarded e-mail would surely rather have remained anonymous, and all of them probably should have known better than to keep on forwarding it. Incidents like this create an unnecessary burden on the Air Force's network infrastructure, interfere with efficient use of duty time, are contrary to appropriate use of Air Force equipment, and can be potentially humiliating for those involved. Paragraph 3.9.1.1 of the AFI prohibits many unofficial uses of government communications systems. Paragraph 3.9.1.1.6 includes chain letters, junk e-mails and broadcasting inappropriate messages to groups or individuals. Failure to comply with the AFI is punishable under Article 92 of the UCMJ as a Failure to Obey Order or Regulation; violation by civilian employees may carry adverse results as well.

As a general rule, putting anything into an e-mail that you wouldn't want to see on the front page of the *Washington Post* or *New York Times* is probably a bad idea.


Fritz Mihelcic
AFCA Deputy Chief Counsel

Send in your question to:
AFCA-JA@scott.af.mil
or call DSN: 779-6060

OVER VIEW

ODE TO THE 702XX

What in the world happened to the 702XXA (admin comm), 702XXB (staff support), and 702XXC (orderly room) administrator of years ago? In 1993, the Air Force administrator was redefined as an information manager, or IMer, and re-designated under the 3AXXX Air Force Specialty Code. The career field underwent further change, when in late 1996 it integrated with communications-computer systems to form communications and information management.

Functional management of the IM career field moved out of the mission support squadron into communications squadrons across the Air Force, bringing a force of more than 13,000 active-duty IMers to the fight.

So why all the change?

In October 1994, the Air Force directed a study on the integration of SC and IM to determine if such integration would provide better support to the warfighter in the 21st century. Rapid technology advancement has transformed the IMer's life cycle management tool kit — from typewriters, OCR messaging, and banks of file cabinets, to desktop computing, high grade messaging and Web-based products. Even though the tools have changed, the mission remains the same — to ensure Air Force information is properly managed throughout its life cycle (regardless of the media) in support of immediate decision-making.

What has changed is the criticality of information to national defense and the skill set needed to manage that information. IM troops will see even more changes ahead. — *compiled report*

WHAT'S AHEAD FOR IM

By Chief Master Sgt. Brian L. Hale
Air Force Information Management and Postal Career Field Manager

PENTAGON — Anxious? Uncertain? Apprehensive? These, and other words, may describe how you feel about the manpower reductions we'll be facing during the next five years.

In the Information Management career field, we'll be reducing the number of manpower authorizations by 2,626 — shrinking our total military IM force to about 6,600 by fiscal year 2011.

While this seems to be a considerable drop in our IM end-strength, we must achieve these force adjustments to help recapitalize and modernize our Air Force.

Through our collective efforts, we'll be contributing to the preservation of our capability and reputation as the fiercest, most respected air and space force in the world, ultimately helping us win our nation's wars.

These reductions won't be easy for us or our customers. But, I'm confident we'll find better, leaner ways of conducting business and mission operations to ensure a manageable work tempo while simultaneously improving information services for the warfighter.

To do this, we'll need to evolve IM to enable a "knowledge dominant environment" where data, information and knowledge are managed succinctly, enabling unprecedented decision superiority for the warfighter. As part of this knowledge based operations transformation, we are investigating ways to improve Client Support Administrator, formerly Workgroup Management, services.

Efficiency, migration to regionalized network services, technology, and security will drive this CSA transformation and how we provide information technology help desk services in the future. Also, we are exploring new approaches to how we position our IM workforce as well as examining what skills our information managers will require in the future to facilitate a pervasive knowledge-based operations environment.

As we transform and brainstorm these and other initiatives, this may lead to rumors of where we're headed as a career field. So, as we continuously evolve, please seek out information from your supervisor or base/major command 3A Functional Manager to gain an accurate insight into our transformation efforts.

Rest assured that the functional management team and our Comm and Info leaders look to posture our career field to meet our mission demands while keeping the development and care of our workforce in the forefront of our decisions.

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READABILITY BASED ON FLESH-KINCAID SCORES
FOG INDEX

The Information Management career field is looking to migrate and consolidate functions.

JARGON WATCH

- **CSA**: Client Support Administrator, formerly known as Workgroup Managers.
- **BITC**: Base Information Transfer Center
- **Knowledge-based ops**: An environment where data and information is shared simultaneously and quickly for decision makers.
- **PDA**: Personal Digital Assistant

A LOOK AT WHAT WE DO & WHO WE ARE

CSA

Staff Sgt. Lekeshia Arrington

We make sure users have immediate access to information they need regarding the network. We provide direct customer support on a wide range of devices and services such as wireless PDAs, printers, external hard disk drives, helping with PC setup or troubleshooting, network connectivity and a myriad of software applications.

Publications

Senior Master Sgt. Walter Spigner

Our staff manages approximately 140 Air Force Comm & Info (33-series) publications. We coordinate directly with subject matter experts, major command, and Headquarters Air Force agencies to ensure field units have immediate, consistent access to the most current guidance available to carry out their Air Force missions.

Records

Master Sgt. Augustin Rivera

Technology revolutionized how we protect and make documents available to support our operations. Running an effective records management program gives our customers a reliable storage, retrieval, and search capability for official records. Our goal is to provide the right information to the right individuals quickly.

Training

Senior Master Sgt. Danny Ogas

My job is to identify and develop the skills necessary for the 3As across the Air Force. From Records Management to CSA, I do my best to make sure we're training our 3As to meet the demands of the warfighter. Although it sounds easy enough, this is like trying to hit a moving target as technology keeps driving our 3As to learn new procedures.

Seminars

Senior Master Sgt. Melvin Capers

Our job in seminars is to provide advanced training for comm and info personnel. We train about 230 active duty, Guard, Reserve and civilians each year here, and then travel to places where we can do more large-scale training sessions. We also provide training recommendations to the career field managers and executive agents.

Client Support

Master Sgt. Johnny Whitted

Two NCOs and I provide IM support to directors and key staff members in Air Mobility Command's Directorate of Communications. It's not a high visibility job as you might expect because most of what we do is behind the scenes. Our job satisfaction comes from from seeing positive results from our taskings.

BITC

Airman Basic Alicia Clark

The BITC is responsible for the distribution of all incoming and outgoing official mail for the base. This includes on-base and off-base correspondence. To enhance base security, we x-ray all incoming mail and packages, to include mail going to the dorms. Our job may not seem glamorous, but it's still a vital one to the mission of the Air Force.

IM & JEFX '06 SUCCESS

New tools speed processes, reduce human-error rates

By Capt. Henry Schott
608th Air Communications Squadron

BARKSDALE AFB, La. — A team of 10 Information Managers and one "green" officer combined efforts to support decision-makers during the Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment, held in April.

The initiatives at JEFX are developed to support the warfighters in the field and the warfighters in a Combined Air and Space Operations Center.

The primary role of an IM in the CAOC is to see that information flows to all divisions of command and that it meets the seven criteria (accurate, timely, relevant, useable, brief, complete, and secure) that make it decision-quality information.

The team not only managed the data, but also maintained the file structure for that data, managed the security groups that provided file access, created and managed e-mail organizational boxes for official taskings, distributed lists for mass coordination, and provided publicly accessible electronic phone books.

They facilitated more than 80 video-teleconferences and moderated more than 70 commander's update briefings in a 40-day time period. These tasks were in addition to their roles as Client Support Administrators and administrative support to all of the divisions. To do this, we used several new IM tools.

XYTHOS FILE MANAGEMENT

"Xythos" is a new file management system with the capability of meeting all records management requirements as defined by the 37 series Air Force Instructions. It has inherent features that make both file-sharing and version control simple for the user. Additionally, the Xythos file structure is Web-based and can be accessed remotely via a Web page application or can be accessed directly from the user's computer as a "shared" drive.

ACE PORTAL

The Air Component Enterprise Portal was another capability that directly contributed to the success of the exercise. The ACE portal was the "single point of entry" for all JEFX applications. This tool not only allowed the consolidation of all information into one central location, but also provided all Web-based applications to use ingrained security measures.

A feature of the ACE portal allowed the consolidation of related files into multiple "mini-windows" on a single page. For instance, they were able to use this feature to consolidate all required documents for each day's Air Tasking Order into one easy to read location.

Collaboration tools such as InfoWorkSpace and Jabber were taken to new levels in JEFX 06. IWS became the primary mode for conducting meetings with 11 of the 12 primary daily meetings occurring in this virtual environment instead of in conference rooms. Jabber, a low-bandwidth chat tool, was used extensively for cross-cell coordination.

VOIP & WEB TOOL MERGER

Additionally, the IM team used new versions of IM Web Tools to schedule the physical assets and video-teleconferences, maintain the Significant Event Log, update the approved acronym list, and populate the on-line phone book. Of particular note was the synchronization of the phone book with the Voice over Internet Protocol phone system. They merged the VoIP system's internal database with IM Web Tools – greatly reducing the work required to physically check extensions on more than 300 instruments.

MESSAGE DISTRIBUTION

Perhaps the biggest accomplishment of the IM team was the work with the Communications Support Team; in particular the message distribution personnel. Early in the experiment they automated the delivery system for official message traffic.

By automating the delivery system, the IM team eliminated the need for a person to spend his entire day on one task, and allowed for more than 20,000 messages to be properly segregated, by type, and delivered to the appropriate personnel for action.

By removing the "man-in-the-middle," they sped up the process and eliminated any human error issues. The result was 100 percent accountability of all message traffic. — *Senior Master Sgt. Daniel Ciconte contributed to this report.*

AIR FORCE RESERVES: GETTING A 'JUMP START' ON WARTIME SKILLS

3A's receive training on how to set up Comm & Info support at a bare base

By Ellen Hatfield Wilt
622nd RSG public affairs

HOMESTEAD ARB, Fla. — The Air Force Reserve's Communications and Information managers got a jump start that didn't involve a dead battery, but rather, a firmer foothold in the Global War on Terrorism.

Jump Start is an Air Force Reserve Command training exercise that tests the Theater Deployable Communications package in a bare base environment. The 514th Communications Squadron from McGuire AFB, N.J., served as the lead training unit for this location. Included in this year's exercise were Information Managers, designated as 3As, giving them the opportunity to receive training in what it takes to set up operation at a bare base.

Training included basic computer concepts, setting up computer systems, loading and configuring software, basic networking, setting up user accounts/e-mails and Web development.

Reservists learned how to cut cables and test the set-up of Local Area Networks during a three-week exercise designed to help them learn how to set up a base from scratch.

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READABILITY BASED ON FLESH-KINCAID SCORES

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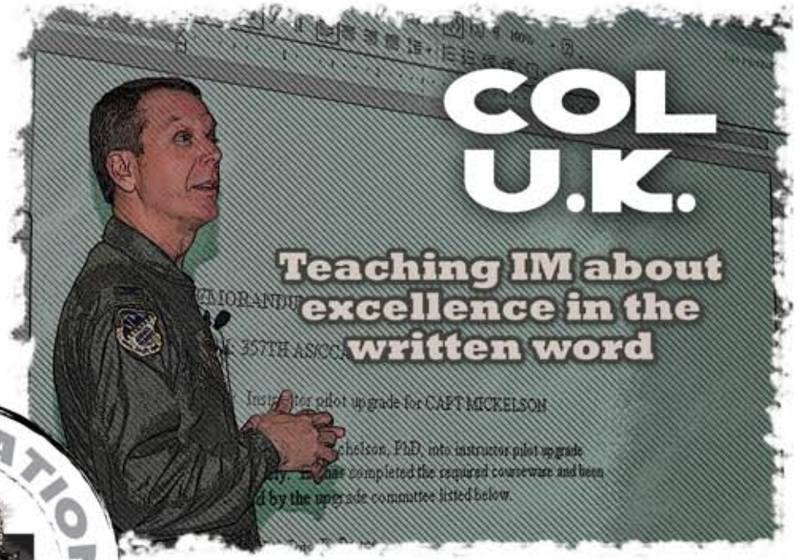
The idea is to train like we fight, and exercise Jump Start and the annual Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment does just that.

JARGON WATCH

- **3A:** Numerical designator given to the Information Manager career field.
- **TDC:** Theater Deployable Communications package
- **CAOC:** Combined Air Operations Center
- **VoIP:** Voice over Internet Protocol



By Ellen Hatfield Wilt
622nd Regional Support Group

MAXWELL AFB, Ala. — As the old song goes, "I'm going to sit right down and write myself a letter," but today, that usually means at a computer terminal, via electronic mail. For Col. Michael Underkofler, that means establishing a standard of excellence for his entire wing.

For the past 10 years, and now as commander of the 908th Airlift Wing here, he's been teaching a course on written correspondence that he simply calls the "Official Air Force Memorandum."

Although the aim of the 1 ½-hour class is to teach parallel construction and standardization, he wants to "correct mistakes in everything we type and do."

Colonel Underkofler, or Col U.K. as he is known, gets a captive audience when teaching information managers as the course fulfills a yearly training requirement. However, he finds others — pilots, nurses, engineers — sit in the class, too. They figure if he takes time out as the wing commander to teach the class, it must be pretty important with him.

An animated speaker, Col U.K. peppers the audience with questions and covers common mistakes.

For example, he pounds home the point that there is only one way to abbreviate lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force, and that's Lt Col. "LTC" or "LtCol," he tells them, are the abbreviations used by the Army and Marine Corps respectively.

He teases, "We worked incredibly hard to become a separate service in 1947, so there's no place for the abbreviation LTC in our Air Force."

He said he teaches the course because he's "constantly amazed that people have a hard time getting into the Air Force way of writing."

He said good organization, content and style have everything to do with your message being received and understood.

If memorandums, as well as other correspondence, meet a high standard of consistency, then they will be read and understood quicker.

"We should get it right the first time," he said. "Standardization in everything we do from how we fly to how we communicate are hallmarks of military professionalism. Creativity can help us win battles, but standardization prepares us for war — and we want to win the war."

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- Standardizing communications gets info to decision-makers quicker.
- Hurlburt AFB, Fla., members use the Internet to get the latest info on hurricane before-and-after warnings and notifications.

JARGON WATCH

- **CoP**: Community of Practice, which arise as people address recurring sets of problems

EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:
INTERNET SOFTWARE TOOL LETS PEOPLE CHECK ON DISASTER RELATED ISSUES 24/7

By Kimberly Risalvato
Air Force Special Operations Command/A6

HURLBURT FIELD, Fla. — The sun beams down on the emerald waters and sugar-white sandy beaches of Northwest Florida. But imminent danger lurks in the distance. A hurricane just devastated Cuba with winds reaching 140 miles per hour and is headed for the Gulf Coast with the Florida Panhandle directly in its path. The National Hurricane Center reports the hurricane is "intensifying at a rate that borders on insane."

At the same time, Air Force Special Operations Command personnel here begin to run evacuation checklists. And thanks to the innovation of the information managers, all command personnel are instantly armed with the information they need to ensure their safety during and after the storm.

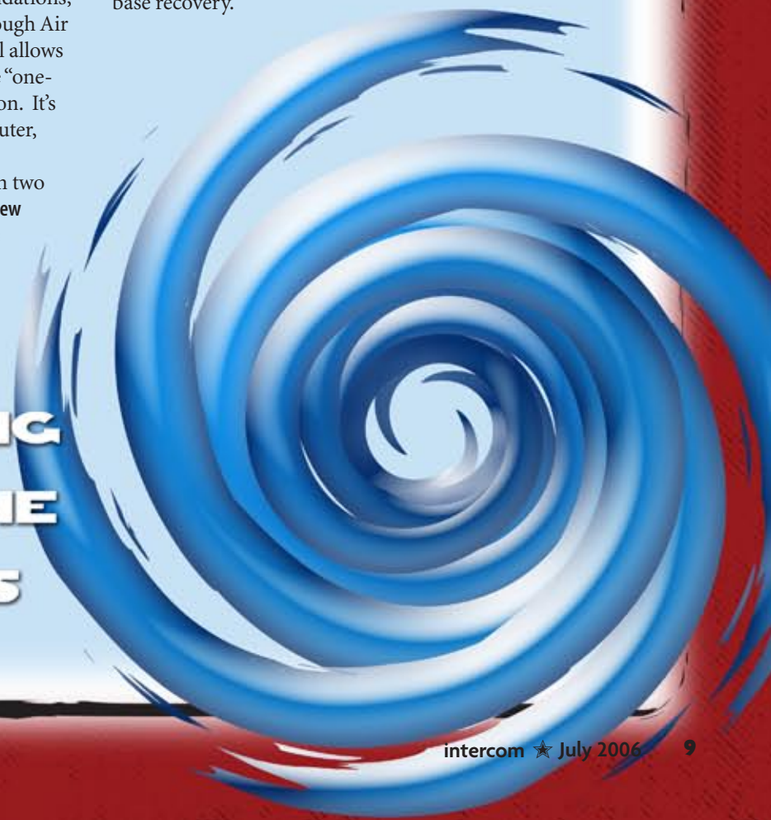
They do this with what's called the AFSOC Emergency Operations Community of Practice, which provides more than 10,000 personnel with real-time updates on hurricane conditions, evacuation orders, recovery information, reconstitution recommendations, and policy decisions. Technology offered through Air Force Knowledge Now via the Air Force Portal allows AFSOC leadership to provide an authoritative "one-stop-shop" for all hurricane-related information. It's accessible from any Internet-connected computer, anywhere, anytime.

The Emergency Operations CoP focuses on two areas. **First, it automatically notifies members when new hurricane or emergency information is posted.** It does this by sending this information to their military and commercial e-mail accounts so they can easily access critical information from their evacuated location.

Second, **the CoP offers a forum for exchanging information.** Evacuated members use the forum to exchange essential information once members are ordered to return to duty. Road closings, electrical outages, and locations of ice and water are some topics commonly shared. **The CoP also saves considerable time and resources.** Hard copy notification messages are eliminated, archives are kept in a secure electronic format, and e-mail traffic is considerably reduced. When bad weather shuts down the base network, the CoP remains available 24/7 from any location.

During the 2005 hurricane season, the Emergency Operations CoP had more than 14,000 visits. It proved to be an efficient and effective management tool for disseminating critical disaster preparedness information to AFSOC personnel in the Florida Panhandle.

The CoP successfully prompted decision-making, got the word out, sped recovery efforts, and mitigated many risks in the lives of AFSOC Airmen and their families. With the 2006 hurricane season in full swing, the Emergency Operations CoP will be the tool of choice to manage and disseminate hurricane information, speed emergency preparedness, and coordinate base recovery.



POSTAL

FROM NARITA TO NEWARK TEAMS DELIVER THE MAIL

U.S., Japan crew supports 200,000 DoD personnel

By Senior Master Sgt. Michael Breazell
Det. 2, PACAF AIRPS

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — A small, dedicated team of 20 U.S. Air Force and Japanese postal warriors oversee mail transportation at Pacific Command's largest Mail Control Activity located on Tokyo's Narita International Airport.

These professionals support more than 200,000 Department of Defense customers in the region.

A typical day for them starts in the dark morning hours with a 75-mile drive winding through the heart of Tokyo traffic. Upon arrival, the crew meets with commercial airline representatives, pours over airline schedules, and takes care of administration and paperwork in preparation for the day's workload.

Then, the hustle begins as two 32-foot trailers packed with outgoing mail arrive from the Yokota Air Base Aerial Mail Terminal and the Yokohama Naval Fleet Mail Center. The Narita cargo area is always buzzing with up to 100 large trucks negotiating for space to pick-up or deliver cargo while small forklifts and tugs dart in and out of every corner in this congested area.

They process about 40 shipping containers daily. Considering that Narita Airport has the second largest commercial freight operation in the world, this is a big accomplishment.

Mail volumes double during the peak season, October through January. The 374th Logistics Readiness Squadron provides nearly 100 additional truck runs to transport mail during this time. Because Narita is a large airline hub, mail also transfers from one aircraft to another. MCA personnel inspect and monitor eight airline warehouses throughout the day to ensure military mail transfers on schedule to one of 65 individual airline flights each day.

Airmen work with sister services during AEF cycle

By Ellen Hatfield Wilt
622nd Regional Support Group

NEWARK INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, N.J. — Three reservists from the 512th Mission Support Squadron provided postal support at the Newark, N.J. International Airport as part of an Air Expeditionary Force deployment.

Tech. Sgt. Chena Bain, and Airmen 1st Class Amanda Gonzalez and Nakeya Holland joined with Army, Navy, Marines and civilian workers to make sure that all the military mail for deployed service people got on its way across the sea.

Sergeant Bain spent much of her time on the airport flightline to monitor loading and unloading of the mail, to track timeliness of the flights and report delays and reasons for delays.

"I gained appreciation of the joint forces concept that I was a part of on a daily basis," she said.

Airman Gonzalez said she gained a new appreciation for the big picture of moving the mail — it's not just the ZIP code that gets the job done.

Airman Holland supervised the packaging of mail into boxes that were loaded onto airplanes. She had to randomly inspect boxes to make sure that mail inside was flagged for the right location, and she had to look for illegal mail.

"The sense of unity we had made me proud to be in the military. For that reason, I'd do this every year if I could," she said.

At the Narita International Airport, Yasuo Saito loads mail headed to Yokota Air Base, Japan.

In Newark, N.J., Reservists from the 512th Mission Support Squadron work with the Army and Navy to get mail to deployed servicemembers in Southwest Asia.

The Postal career field is a special duty assignment, with its own Air Force Specialty Code, 8M. It falls under the support and direction of the IM Career Field Manager.

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READABILITY BASED ON FLESH-KINCAID SCORES

FOG INDEX

- Kudos to the hard working teams in Japan and New Jersey for keeping our mail safe and timely.

JARGON WATCH

- **MCA**: Mail Control Activity

POINT OF VIEW

CLIENT SUPPORT
WHO YA GONNA CALL & WHERE ARE THEY?

By Chief Master Sgt. Alan J. Smiley
AETC 3A Functional Manager

RANDOLPH AFB, Texas —Do me a favor ... take a few seconds before reading this whole article and do two things. 1. Dial one of these numbers: 1-800-433-9014; 1-800-OK-COM-PAQ; or 1-888-4-SONY-PC. 2. Now ask the person who answered where they are located. Hmmmm. Malaysia? India? San Antonio? Other than just being old and senile, why would I ask you to do that? It has a lot to do with who will be answering your calls for help in the future and where they will be located.

With the recent cuts — deep cuts — in the number of Communications and Information personnel (3As, 3Cs, 3Vs, 8Ms and 2Es), we have to take a serious look at how we're doing business.

One process in particular that needs to transform will require our customers to totally change their way of thinking.

Our customers have grown used to having a Client Support Administrator, formerly known as workgroup manager, readily available to work their magic with basic computer support. In most cases, CSAs were in the same squadron and sometimes right in the next cubicle.

With the reductions, we will no longer have the ready access for people performing the CSA role. We will more than likely have to roll up the support to at least the group level, and in some cases to the wing.

I know, I know, some of you are saying, "Chief, there's no way we will be able to sell this to our customers — they already think two minutes without e-mail is too long?"

Well, use the example I mentioned earlier, and ask this question. When they have problems at home with their computer and they dial 1-800-WHATEVER to get the customer support for the particular brand of computer they purchased, where is that person located? More than likely, they did not yell into the kitchen or living room and expect someone to come running (computer-smart children don't count).

We don't want anyone to suffer mission failure, but we must be realistic. We will have slower response time on fixes. So, we must come up with a game plan to consolidate our remaining resources to better support customers.

If we want to totally look at client support, why not develop a workcenter that a client can reach by dialing one phone number and get started on fixing whatever computer, network or Web problem they might have?

For instance, if I have a problem with my PDA, I would call a help desk. Same goes for someone with a question about their desktop or e-mail access. Currently, we could call at least three different numbers. Leaders are looking at that process right now.

If we expect the remaining C&I personnel to accomplish their mission post-PBD 720, the Air Force's Program Budget Decision to cut our force in size to match current and future budgets, then we need to review every process we own, including an area near and dear to my heart —document management and suspense tracking.

Are you still printing copies of documents and placing them in a folder (don't forget to insert the floppy disk inside the little plastic pouch) and physically taking the folder on a "distro-run?"

In the last year, the loudest outpouring of emotions had nothing to do with the high cost of gas or the elimination of positions under PBD 720. It was the screams from people who received a new desktop or laptop that no longer had a 3¼ inch disk slot.

We must also start using our Web-enabled tools. Place your documents on a shared drive and grant access privileges to those who need to edit, read or write to the document. Better yet, use an electronic document workflow or suspense tracking system (Web-based of course) and have all of those who send, respond, coordinate or review correspondence in your workcenter, squadron or base learn to use it.

To be successful in the post-PBD 720 environment there are a few more specific things we need to do.

STAY COMPETENT
It's vital that we learn our craft and stay proficient. We'll be fewer, so we'll have to share the load and rely on each other. It's harder to carry something if you have to stop every inch and explain to everyone how to bend at the knees and lift with your legs. Knowledge is the key.

BE ORGANIZED
Together, we'll be stronger and better able to continue to fulfill our mission. We don't want a single point of failure. So, consolidate your resources — more competent people working together provide a better force to fight and win in our daily tasks.

MODERNIZE
Use all of our technological advances to continue to move ahead. Never become stagnant and accept the old comfortable way of doing business when there are easier and better methods to use.

STAY MISSION FOCUSED
Allow our authorities to access reliable, critical data in a timely manner. Protect our data, and deny our enemies access to theirs. Communicate and dominate.

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READABILITY BASED ON FLESH-KINCAID SCORES
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Customers need to have a new way of thinking when it comes to computer support.

JARGON WATCH

PBD 720 is the Air Force's Program Budget Decision to cut the Air Force in size to match current and future budget requirements.

FULL SPEED AHEAD: KEESLER SKILL LEVEL TRAINING RUNNING AT 100%

By Chief Master Sgt. Brian L. Hale
Air Force Information Management and Postal Career Field Manager

KEESLER AFB, Miss. — The unrelenting winds of Hurricane Katrina have disappeared; but, the unrelenting dedication of the Information Management training staff of the 336th Technical Training Squadron has not.

Despite the enormous task of reconstituting the base, assisting the communities, and coping with their personal losses, 336th TRS personnel have remained resolved to training the next generation of Airmen.

Within weeks after the hurricane last year, the IM training staff resurrected the IM initial skills training capability. But, realizing the magnitude of the storm and the challenges the IM staff had to cope with, 26 information managers from several major commands accepted the call to augment the 336th TRS instructors to ensure mission success.

The first group of 13 instructors arrived here in January and augmented the instructor staff for 150 days. They learned the curriculum quickly and taught the trainees the skills they need to succeed in the IM career field. The second group of temporary instructors arrived in June and will augment the initial skill course instructor staff until September.

Thanks to the efforts of the 336th TRS staff and the augmentee instructors, Keesler incrementally increased its training capabilities to where, today, it has completely reconstituted the information management basic and advanced skills courses.

Ultimately, their hard work and dedication has paved the way to ensure we remain on track to meet the fiscal year 2006 training requirements — preparing nearly 2,100 active, Guard, and Reserve personnel for award of their 3-and 7-skill levels.

Staff Sgt. Larenza Smartt assists with upgrade training issues.

▸ **BACKGROUND PHOTO:** Data technicians with 1st CBCS build the local area network at Forward Operating Station Eagle in Tuzla.
▸ **BOTTOM LEFT:** Staff Sgt. Wendee Marshall conducts triple layer login procedures with Macedonian communicators.
▸ **BOTTOM MIDDLE:** 1st CBCS team members build a network.
▸ **BOTTOM RIGHT:** Staff Sgt. Richard MacLaughlin and a French data engineer make network changes.

COMBINED ENDEAVOR '06

1st Combat Communications Squadron

Ramstein team supports largest communications interoperability exercise

By Capt. Steven J. Peña
1st Combat Communications Squadron

BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA— More than 140 people from 10 NATO and Partnership for Peace countries converged on the "forgotten base" at Eagle Base, in Tuzla during May with one mission in mind: to conduct safe interoperability testing and document the results.

The 30-day testing period, called Combined Endeavor, is the largest communications interoperability exercise in the world. It's comprised of more than 40 nations from four continents totaling more than 1,200 participants in 2006. The significance of this exercise is important because future European theatre operations will require multi-national communications, and interoperability will be crucial to their success.

This is the third year since its inception in 1995 where the exercise integrated a forward operating site outside of Germany into their test plan, and the 1st Combat Communications Squadron out of Ramstein AB, Germany, was there to support the effort. Integrating a forward site into the test plan mirrors what a multi-national coalition may face during humanitarian, disaster relief or peacekeeping operations.

"The First" deployed 39 combat communicators who, together with a support staff from various units throughout United States Air Forces in Europe, were crucial to accomplishing the mission.

With a dual role of support and testing they ran phones for 140 personnel and equipped 10 delegations and their representatives with wireless network access for e-mail. They also set up a CE Planning Tracking and Reporting tool used to schedule tests and document results.

Using wireless technology in the field was a first for the squadron and a USAFE "proof of concept" that could potentially save time and money with the unit's effort to become lighter and leaner. Normally designed for a fixed-base environment, 1st CBCS took the first generation wireless system and married it with its deployable data package, proving its ability to operate in field conditions.

"Integrating wireless into deployable packages decreases pallet space, weight requirements, and time previously dedicated to running cable," said Airman Christopher Sterbank, Computer Systems Operator.

The team also deployed two satellite communication terminals. One provided a real world link into the Defense Integrated Services Network and for Internet connectivity and the other link provided 6MB worth of bandwidth. The 5th Signal Battalion out of Mannheim, Germany, helped to establish and maintain this critical link.

However, none of this would be possible without reliable power. Ten nations each had their own power requirements and configurations, which presented a challenge.

As liaison between the Eagle Base Area Service Team and the exercise participants, 1st CBCS ensured the right kind of power was available for each delegation upon arrival.

Their role in testing was just as important. They conducted more than 65 tests with other delegations. Serving as the lead nation for data transfer services testing at the forward site meant they provided network security, Web services and the external router for the Georgian, French and Croatian delegations. Voice testing was also successful.

"This was the perfect opportunity for us to test our E-1 capability," said Staff Sgt. Jason Bass, Voice Technician. "We tested with every nation here, and it worked great."

GUARDIAN ANGEL

A C-17 Globemaster III from the 14th Airlift Squadron, Charleston AFB, S.C., flies off after releasing flares during a training mission in the skies above the Atlantic Ocean. The "smoke angel" is created by the airflow over the wings.

Tech. Sgt. Russell E. Cooley, IV / 1st CTCS

BAD GUYS BEWARE

Standard Desktop Configuration reduces possibility of malicious hacker activities

By Kathleen A.K. Lopez
Air Force Materiel Command Public Affairs

WRIGHT-PATTERSON AIR FORCE BASE, Ohio — In an effort to stay one step ahead of the cyberspace "bad guys," a.k.a. computer hackers, the Air Force is mandating a new standard desktop configuration, or SDC, that will establish a uniform and secure desktop environment.

For the Air Force "good guys" this means there will be one more layer of added protection for computer users, thus heightening their security settings. The new configuration affects all Windows-based work stations connecting to both the unclassified and classified systems. Additionally, there will be standardization of common office software, including Microsoft Word, Excel, Internet Explorer, PowerPoint, Outlook, Norton Antivirus, Adobe Acrobat Reader and others.

"What this means to Airmen is that all aspects of computers used, including Windows Operating Systems, anti-virus programs, smart card readers and common media players will operate uniformly regardless of where individuals are operating across the Air Force," said Robert Trame, Air Force Materiel Command's SDC implementation manager. **"However, the primary purpose for the SDC is on the security side. Our goal is to reduce vulnerabilities to malicious activities from hackers.**

"Because work station's configurations are more securely controlled, people will no longer have access to perform tasks requiring administrative privilege such as installing software or visiting some .com sites," he said. "Other than that type of inconvenience, users should experience few interruptions during the SDC transformation process."

Jon S. Ogg, AFMC communications director, said the Air Force will first concentrate on the unclassified systems. Each major command was tasked to identify one of its bases to lead the others through the configuration. For AFMC, that lead is Hill AFB in Utah, which began its SDC journey April 24. Additionally, Hill AFB will be used to assist the Air Force's Configuration Management Office in validating and improving deployment processes, as well as determining sustainable implementation rates.

Lt. Gen. Michael W. Peterson, Air Force Chief of Warfighting Integration and chief information officer, approved the SDC in March.

"This initiative represents a major improvement in how we manage, operate and secure our network," he said. "I understand this will be difficult to accomplish. We will all need to work together to identify and apply the right solutions."

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Once a port on a computer has been scanned, and it's determined to be responsive to access attempts, an intruder can begin malicious activity. The SDC is aimed at protecting against such events.

JARGON WATCH

SDC: Standard Desktop Configuration

STANDARDIZATION

The initiative, which is mandatory for all Windows-based work stations, aims to standardize software suites while providing increased security at the user level.

RESTRICTED ACCESS

Users will no longer be able to install their own software nor do simple maintenance. Users may also experience more restrictions on .com Internet addresses.

ACCLIMATE

Like any new initiative, it's expected users will experience a few bumps in the road. However, leaders are requesting patience and teamwork to identify and apply the right solutions.

BOTTOM LINE

The primary purpose of the secure desktop configuration initiative is security. This means one more layer of security at the user level, and one less portal for the hackers.

POINT OF VIEW

MACHINE-TO-MACHINE

IT'S TIME TO MOVE PAST CONVENTIONAL THINKING

By 2nd Lt. Eric Holloway
Air Force Communications Agency

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — The electrical power grid spawned modern industry; the combustion engine was the genesis of modern transportation; and the personal computer and the Internet have brought the world of information into everyone's home.

Today, electronic devices, intelligent machines, and sensors are deeply integrated into everyday activities. However, most have yet to realize a new world of more autonomous network activity because our expectations are often restricted based on what is already known.

Consider today's computing networks and where they might be headed in the future.

Current Internet Protocol networks and the address scheme used to identify networked devices are primarily intended for human interaction whether it's human-to-human interaction such as e-mail and text chat or human-to-machine interaction such as Web research and online shopping. If for no other reason, this scale is apparent when comparing the number of IP addresses to people on the planet — both are in the single digit billions.

In contrast, the network of the future will likely be dominated by interactions among intelligent, autonomous networked components and sub-components that perform valuable tasks with only a small fraction of interaction actually involving humans. Because there could be far more of these devices than people, machine-to-machine-based interaction will significantly dwarf human network usage and today's network addressing scheme. In addition, network-provided services will expand greatly beyond what we know and expect today.

The essential difference between today's network-enabled services, and network activity of the future, will be the notion of synergy emerging from the automatic interaction of many intelligent devices.

As an analogy, the human body consists of several organs linked together to sustain life. Countless organ functions and nervous system signals are constant and vital to sustain life, but most are subconscious to the individual. In a more dynamic example, think of the feedback systems among the senses, muscles, and mind of the human body when running to catch a ball. Because our bodies can directly react to what we sense, we are able to respond both quickly and accurately to our environment, and we are able to dynamically adjust what we are doing.

With these analogies in mind, think about how this idea extends to the military. Advanced sensor and feedback systems can interact with each other and with the surrounding environment. Components of these systems can directly respond to what they perceive, so they are able to respond both quickly and accurately to what happens. Such a level of capability within the military would be a formidable force allowing forces to rapidly, and in many cases automatically, respond to changing situations. **This line of thinking can go from the ability of systems to work as a single unit, to the precise and automatic processes of repair and replenishment — networks that are self-forming and self-healing.**

To do this, engineers need to expand the current way of thinking beyond human-directed network activity. **If an appreciation of future, autonomous networked devices became widespread, there would be a much greater motivation to actually implement such networks on a massive scale.**

Also, intentional, intelligent direction is needed to move toward this vision. Several technologies and concepts are advancing this networking perspective including increased network reliability and availability, IP v.6, extensible markup language data tagging, battery technology and network asset management to name a few.

The time is now to move past current thinking and expect more from our networks, and then we'll know an even greater Internet than we know today.

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The computers of tomorrow will have less human interaction than there is now.

JARGON WATCH

IP v.6: Most of today's Internet uses Internet Protocol v.4, which is 20 years old and now has a shortage of IP addresses needed for new machines.

C4ISR ★ Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance

IN THE SKY

WARFIGHTERS OF THE FUTURE

Project dubbed 'Gun Coast' saves time, lives

By Staff Sgt. C. Todd Lopez
Air Force Print News

WASHINGTON — At this moment, above Iraq and Afghanistan, American data sensors are collecting information and intelligence about ground movement.

What happens to that data depends largely on a sensor's owner and its mission. The data could be reviewed immediately, or it could be stored for later use. Often times that information can go unused.

The Air Force wants to prevent that type of information loss and is currently experimenting with a way to take data and make use of it the moment it comes off sensors. During June's Northern Edge exercise in Alaska, the Air Force tested a system that does just that. It's called the Global Net Centric Surveillance and Targeting, or GNCST, system.

Called "Gun Coast" by those involved with the project, the system can take near real-time information from a nearly unlimited set of data sensors and process it into useable information for the warfighter.

"A lot of platforms and capabilities will be fusing their data into one single funnel and Gun Coast is at the bottom of the funnel," said Maj. Gen. Gregory H. Power, Director of Operations and Support Integration, SAF/XI. "It takes all that information in, and through algorithms, is able to digest and disseminate quickly and accurately the position of something such as a (surface-to-air missile) site."

The system uses a Web-based interface on a secured computer network. An end user might access the system and ask it to locate surface-to-air missiles, or SAMs, that appeared in a specific region within the last 45 minutes. Gun Coast would then respond, in as little as a few seconds, with target coordinates.

That type of responsiveness and accuracy would be of great use to pilots, General Power said.

"If we had a mission that was going to attack a target, GNCST might identify a mobile SAM system that had moved into the area as the aircraft took off. Of course, the pilot would not know about that," he said. "But ... that data would be available for the air operations center to pass to the pilot. This really is a kind of life-saving technology that, once fully developed, is really going to give us an edge on the battlefield."

The Air Force processes much of its intelligence information with humans, but, humans can't work as fast or process as much data as the machines.

"This machine-to-machine interface we will have with GNCST will allow us to (process information) in seconds, minutes at most (rather than days and hours). And the timeliness and accuracy of the information is the value we bring to the warfighter." **The GNCST system was developed primarily to locate SAM sites, but it can be modified to find any number of potential threats, from Scud missiles to tanks.** Complex computer algorithms allow the system to look at nearly any kind of raw sensor data and locate threats. And as the GNCST system develops, those algorithms will be adjusted to recognize any new threats.

"In the future, the database will be a living document, if you will. The list of threat systems will continuously be changing. As new systems are developed they, too, will be added to the database. The GNCST system could even find 'non-threat systems,'" General Power said.

One concern with allowing a computer to pick a target is the fear of removing the "human element" from the kill chain. In the Air Force command and control community, "kill chain" refers to the series of events leading from identification of a potential target to the ultimate destruction or "kill" of that target. The target could be a building, a cave, a convoy or a communications tower.

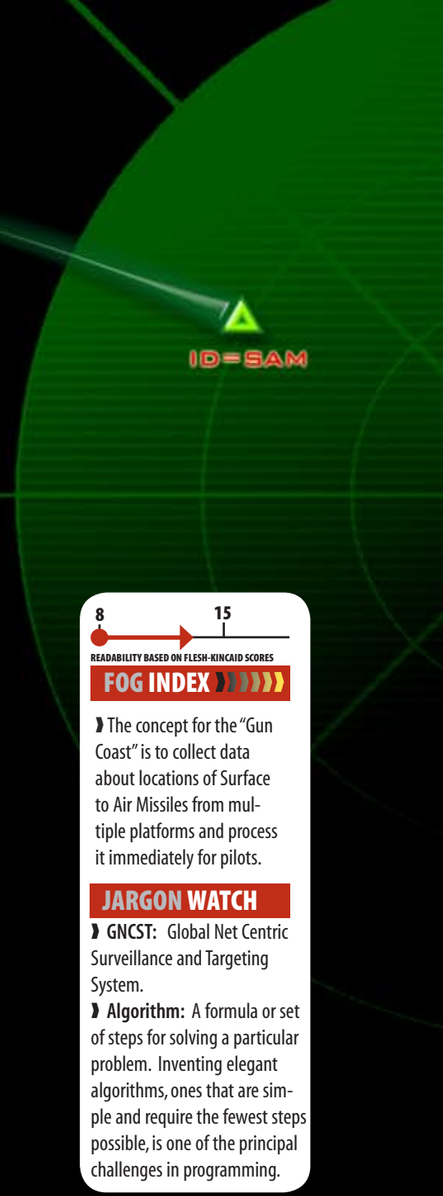
While the kill chain can be shortened through the use of computers, at the end, there is always a human who makes the final decision to employ force, General Power said. That will not be eliminated with implementation of GNCST.

"Just like in any execution decision, there will be rules of engagement on scenarios," he said. "Once the concept of operations is developed, there will be certain checks and balances in it. The final element is the executing human being — the pilot on the sortie — at the end of the kill chain who will have the final say on if they drop on the target."

While the system is only in development now, General Power said he hopes the Air Force signs on for the system. Its performance at Northern Edge will figure into the Air Force's decision to become more involved in the technology.

"GNCST will bring intelligence information with more accuracy in a much shorter time period than currently possible," he said. "It means we can find and accurately locate bad guys in a much shorter period of time, and hopefully prevent them from causing harm to friendly forces — in other words, saving friendly lives."

Development of the GNCST system is spearheaded by the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency. Partners in the project include the Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory in Laurel, Md., and the United States Strategic Command.



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The concept for the "Gun Coast" is to collect data about locations of Surface to Air Missiles from multiple platforms and process it immediately for pilots.

JARGON WATCH

- **GNCST:** Global Net Centric Surveillance and Targeting System.
- **Algorithm:** A formula or set of steps for solving a particular problem. Inventing elegant algorithms, ones that are simple and require the fewest steps possible, is one of the principal challenges in programming.

ON THE GROUND

SENTRY BECOMES FLYING DIGITAL LAB

Tactical Targeting Network Technology Radio

552nd ACW Maintenance Group members transfer a TTNT radio from one AWACS to another for a test flight during the Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment '06.

Ground crews, battle managers see the same picture

Goal is to have digital communications first, voice comm second

By Capt. Corinna Jones
552nd Air Control Wing Public Affairs

TINKER AIR FORCE BASE, Okla. — The 960th Airborne Air Control Squadron is on the forefront of testing new technology designed to make communication between ground and air assets via a digital network.

During Joint Expeditionary Force Experiment '06 at Nellis AFB, Nev., the squadron and its E3 AWACS aircraft tested the new Tactical Targeting Network Technology Radio in an operational environment.

"This is the first time an operational E-3 aircraft has been modified with prototype technology," said Maj. Bill Apodaca, 960th assistant director of operations. "Furthermore, this is the first time E-3 operational crews have flown and tested new technology."

The E-3 Sentry is an all-weather, surveillance command, control and communications aircraft. However, the data link capability of current Air Force command and control aircraft is limited by architecture and bandwidth output.

In the past, output bandwidth, machine-to-machine and global communication experiments were conducted by Air Force, Department of Defense workers and government contractors flying in a contracted Boeing 707.

This time, two 552nd ACW E-3s and crews teamed up in this simulated operational environment to take the experimentation to the next level.

Following the first test flight, Major Apodaca said they had positive reports.

"The radio performed really well. Once we got a connection, the Combined Air Operations Center started passing taskings to us," he said. "With this network we're able to communicate digitally what we currently communicate by voice."

This technology provides more than just a network. Now, crews in the CAOC will see exactly what air battle managers are seeing on their scopes in the sky.

"The E-3 will be an extension of the CAOC. **We will virtually be sitting next to them in the CAOC and them next to us**," he said. "If we can prove the technology works, the next step will be to integrate it into the command and control structure itself; the E-3, Joint Star, U2, RC-135 and other platforms."

The TTNT radio offers a significant improvement for the E-3. Currently, command and control aircraft take in information that is saved on disks, analyzed and manually sent to warfighters and planners. Air battle managers then communicate what they see to fellow warfighters and decision-makers on the ground by voice radio.

With this digital technology, everyone in the game will have the information in real time, thus drastically shortening the "kill chain."

By the end of JEFX '06, Sentry crewmembers proved TTNT is a real-time command and control network, paving the way for further experimentation.

"It's actually a pretty stable network once we got the configurations set up correctly and optimized our orbit," Major Apodaca said. "On the last day we completed six threads from beginning to end, more than all the other days combined. Which means the CAOC sent [a tasking] to us, we sent it to the shooter (fighter jets), the shooter eliminated the target, sent that information back to us, and we sent the results back to the CAOC."

In the end, though the network was working and a number of tasks were completed solely through digital means, voice radio was still necessary for a number of scenarios.

The major said the ultimate goal is to have the primary communication link between all military command and control assets to be visual through digital data link, making voice communication secondary.

Testing the TTNT in an operational environment with active-duty crews was not only beneficial for the experiment; it also gave the crews themselves a chance to network and operate in a joint environment.

"It was a good thing to get an operational E-3 unit to participate, because by only getting test units out to these events you just don't get the operational part of it," he said. "In addition, the joint participation in this experiment was phenomenal. Army, Navy and Air Force — all networked together — it really was a significant achievement. Not only for the technology, but also for everyone involved."

AWACS THE E3 SENTRY

- **FUNCTION:** Airborne surveillance, command, control and communications
- **LENGTH:** 145 feet, 8 inches
- **WINGSPAN:** 130 feet, 10 inches
- **SPEED:** Optimum cruise 360 mph
- **CEILING:** Above 29,000 feet
- **DATE DEPLOYED:** March 1977
- **CREW:** Flight crew of four plus mission crew of 13-19 specialists depending on the mission
- **INVENTORY:** 33 active and 1 test
- **COST:** $270 million

TIME MACHINE

colonial comm

MESSAGES THAT HELPED FREEDOM RING

By Gerald Sonnenberg
AFCA Public Affairs

SCOTT AIR FORCE BASE, Ill. — Sending important messages in today's technological environment is as easy as the touch of a button. But, 230 years ago, it took muscle, sweat, and a fast horse.

Take for instance Jack Jouett and Israel Bissel whose efforts led the "shot heard 'round the world" to be heard and who kept some of the Revolution's most famous rebels out of British hands.

After the Battle of Lexington and Concord in Massachusetts April 19, 1775, Bissel, a post rider on the Boston to New York route, was ordered to raise the alarm by carrying the news to New Haven, Conn.

He reached Worcester, Mass., in two hours as opposed to the typical full-day's ride. According to legend, his horse died on the spot. Bissel grabbed another horse and pressed on.

By April 22, he reached New Haven. Two days later, he was in New York. The next day, he rode to Philadelphia. His 345-mile ride took 125 hours, caused anti-British riots, and signaled Minutemen throughout the Northeast to prepare for war.

Six years later, on the night of June 3, 1781, Jouett, a captain in the Virginia militia, spotted 250 British cavalry, or Dragoons, headed for Charlottesville, Va., to capture Thomas Jefferson, Patrick Henry and the entire Virginia assembly.

Jouett was asleep on the lawn of the "Cuckoo Tavern," which is now a private residence. The 6' 4" Jouett mounted his horse as soon as the Dragoons passed. He then headed into the dense forest for a 40-mile ride to wake up Thomas Jefferson and some of the Virginia legislators who were staying in Monticello.

Jouett's face was swollen and bleeding from being whipped by tree branches. Then, without hesitation, he took off for Charlottesville to warn the rest of the legislature.

The assembly escaped, but not until after they voted to reconvene on June 7th in Staunton, Va.

By the time the Dragoons arrived, the Americans had fled.

NEWS BRIEFS

CYBER CRIME

VA TASK FORCE EXAMINES LOSS OF PRIVACY INFORMATION

THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS Affairs has begun a thorough examination of policies and procedures after the loss of 26.5 million veterans' personal information, the VA's leader told the House Armed Services Committee May 25.

"I've formed a task force ... to examine comprehensively all of our information security programs and policies to bring about a change in the way we do business," R. James Nicholson said.

His testimony followed the May 22 announcement that a Veterans Affairs employee had taken electronic data home with him, though he was unauthorized to do so. The information was stolen when his house was burglarized May 3, though Mr. Nicholson was not made aware of the loss until May 16.

The employee has been placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of a full-scale investigation, he said.

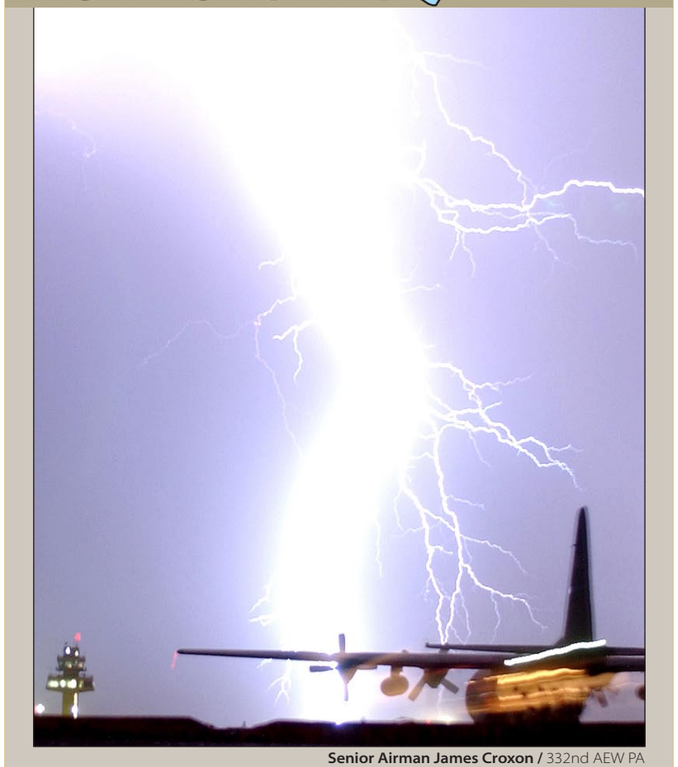
The department also has taken extensive steps to notify and protect the affected veterans, he said. They will be notified by individual letter, Mr. Nicholson said during the May 22 announcement.

The data stolen from the employees' home contained the names and birth dates of 26.5 million veterans and some spouses, as well as Social Security numbers for 19.6 million veterans, he told the committee. Also, some data lost could include numerical disability ratings and the diagnostic codes identifying disabilities being compensated.

The VA also is working with the three major credit bureaus, and all three — Equifax, Experian and TransUnion — have simplified the process for veterans requesting a fraud alert. — *Samantha L. Quigley, AFPS*

Concerned veterans also can get more information by calling 1- (800) 333-4636 from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. EST, Monday through Saturday to reach the manned call center. They can also visit www.firstgov.gov.

NIGHT LIGHTS IN IRAQ



Senior Airman James Croxon / 332nd AEW PA

Lightning strikes near a taxiing C-130 at Balad AB, Iraq. Balad handles more than 750 cargo flights each month and is one the DoD's busiest single runway. Using C-130s to fly in-theater missions has reduced the number of ground convoys and troops exposed to roadside bomb attacks.

TECHNOLOGY

RECORDS MANAGEMENT GETS INTO THE 21ST CENTURY

AIR FORCE Records Management has come a long way since the 2003 introduction of the Web-based Records Information Management System, or RIMS.

As the application has grown, so has the need to keep up with a fast, reactive system. In the past year, newer, more robust servers have come online, which has improved performance.

One of those improvements comes from the Air Force Communications Agency. It has redesigned the Oracle database to allow detailed audit data to be logged, thus enhancing system integrity. Also, to conform to new security policies, password and account authentication have been updated.

To ease password confusion, users with multiple AFRIMS roles now only need one account instead of separate accounts for each role. In the April '06 release, AFRIMS began to exploit the Web tool known as the Enterprise Corporate Analysis – Time Saver, or ECATS. As AFRIMS users update and process file plans for approval,

AFRIMS cont'd

an ECATS topic is created to capture approval requests, approval and disapprovals and records custodians comments. ECATS also allows records managers to stay informed of resource management news, AFRIMS outages and frequently asked questions.

As AFRIMS evolves, the following near term enhancements are on the horizon.

- An improved staging module that allows resource managers to input a local accession number and multiple boxes using one input screen.
- A capability that allows users to schedule, notify and be reminded of scheduled staff assistance visits.
- An enhanced training report to show totals and percentages for individual roles.
- The system will also identify file plan records that are covered by the Privacy Act.

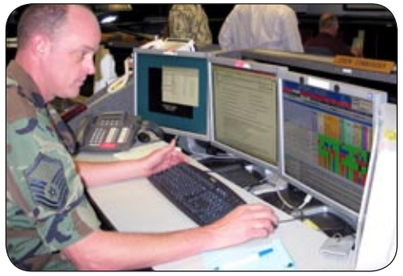
For more information, contact Richard Jolly, AFCA at DSN 779-6711, or send an e-mail to afca.easm@scott.af.mil.

FORGING AHEAD

AF SPACE COMMAND CONSOLIDATES, INTEGRATES 170 NETWORKS, SYSTEMS INTO CENTRAL HUB OF OPERATIONS

AIR FORCE SPACE COMMAND stood up a major command coordination center, or MCCC, June 1, creating a single focal point for all network systems across the command.

All major commands are required by HQ Air Force to consolidate network operations and systems under an MCCC. Air Force Space Command's MCCC is the first of its kind in the Air Force, and could become a model for other major commands. This effort is a major step in consolidating network operations across the Air Force. There are more than 170 networks and systems within the command. Consolidating them will help standardize their operations, provide "one-stop shopping" for issues affecting the systems and provide greater oversight of systems across the board.



Master Sgt. Pete Norris reviews information in the new Air Force Space Command Major Command Coordination Center, or MCCC.

The command is spending approximately $750,000 to stand up the MCCC. Staffing for the center is coming from the existing network operations and security center. Although the MCCC will initially consolidate operations only, the eventual goal is to consolidate infrastructure that could result in significant cost savings. Additionally, the command has been selected to stand up one of two integrated network operation and security centers, known as I-NOSCs, that eventually will become a hub for network operations across the Air Force. The other I-NOSC will be located at Langley Air Force Base, Va.

"Our lifeblood dependence on communications networks for mission ... ours will likely be (the) largest, most encompassing and flagship MCCC in the Air Force," said Brig. Gen. Stephen L. Lanning, director of AFSPC's logistics and communication. — *Capt. Joe Macri, AFSPC*

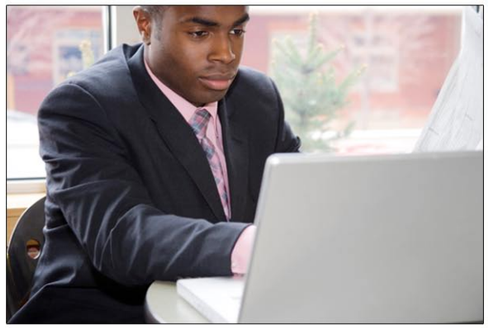
ADJUSTMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN

Maj. David Kurle / 455th AEW

Staff Sgt. Kyle Brock makes adjustments in an operations module at the 73rd Expeditionary Air Control Squadron at Kandahar Airfield, Afghanistan. Sergeant Brock is a computer maintenance technician deployed from Spangdahlem Air Base, Germany.

CIVILIAN FOCUS

NEW WEB SITES OFFER CIVILIANS ACCESS TO PERSONAL INFORMATION



THE AIR FORCE launched two self-service modules in June that allows civilians to access their personnel information.

My Biz allows employees secure, real-time, online access to view information such as benefits, awards and bonuses, and positions from their official personnel records. In addition, employees may update their telephone number and e-mail address, disability codes, race and national origin (ethnicity and race identification), and foreign language proficiency online with My Biz.

My Workplace brings key information to civilian and military managers and supervisors about their employees together in one place, streamlining the human resources decision-making process and helping to balance managerial tasks with day-to-day demands more easily. My Workplace keeps managers and supervisors informed about their employees' personnel actions. With online access to employees' personnel information, managers are able to make budget decisions, manage staffing plans and work distributions more efficiently. — *AFPN*

For more information about My Biz and My Workplace contact your local civilian personnel flight or visit http://ask.afpc.randolph.af.mil/.

KUDOS

COMM SQUADRON PIONEERS GEAR FOR TOMORROW'S WARFIGHTER

SIX AIRMEN FROM the 17th Communications Squadron from Goodfellow AFB, Texas, recently demonstrated the Rapid Attack Information Dissemination Execution Relay, or RAIDER, and the Battlefield Airborne Communications Node, or BACN.

RAIDER is Humvee and BACN is a modified WB-57 unmanned aerial vehicle. Both systems contain a complex suite of communications and are used to improve situational awareness, command and control, and intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance dissemination among participants by bridging otherwise non-interoperable datalink-equipped weapons systems.

"We were connecting special forces UAVs tracking SCUDs, with numerous tactical air control parties, and we could see the same picture they could see in the Air Operations Center," said Master Sgt. Kevin Farthing.

Senior Airman Ben Eichler explanined that "RAIDER is a good system because it brings units together and lets them communicate even when they have different radios. A ground unit with one radio can call a plane with a different radio to help them. It's a great networking gateway system. It allows all parts of the military to work together. It will be a big help to the field once it is put into action. For such a compact package, it provides a tremendous capability to the warfighter." — *17th CS*

FORGING AHEAD

SECAF: COMMANDERS KEY TO AFSO 21 SUCCESS

A CORNERSTONE OF the Secretary of the Air Force's tenure is Air Force Smart Operations 21. He recently said that Air Force leaders hold the key to success for the initiative.

"I have told our leaders that we cannot allow AFSO 21 to escape the wing leadership, whether that is the wing commander, group or squadron commanders or command chief," said Michael W. Wynne. "(Ownership of AFSO21) has to stay in that cradle. This is the leverage that we need to make innovative Airmen to feel comfortable bringing forward ideas that make their job easier."

For AFSO 21 to work, it's important that a good idea doesn't get stuck at the lower echelons. Every Airman should feel comfortable bringing an improvement idea to the command section as long as there is a rationale on whether it's a good thing to change, keep or get rid of, he said. The Air Force also needs to do a better job of getting rid of irrelevant processes. — *AFPN*

BEAM ME UP

COMPUTER CHIP PROVIDES AIR FORCE A TICKET TO MARS

What is it?

About the size of a quarter, the Field Programmable Gate Array computer chip consists of 400 to 500 million transistors and two to three miles of wiring. Its flexible capacity significantly contributed to the Air Force's decision to use the small component in its next generation of satellite systems and space vehicles.

Why do we need it?

Initially designed and developed for use in NASA's Mars Pathfinder mission in 1997, there has been a huge increase in the amount of data that is transmitted, and that trend will continue in the future. Scientists are developing the FPGA chip to meet the increasing demand of new technology.

How does it work?

Invented in the commercial sector in the mid-1980s, the FPGA differs from a standard microprocessor, which serves a specific purpose such as image compression or video streaming.

That's because the same device can be reprogrammed to perform multiple functions.

The FPGA provided to NASA in 1996 featured an 8,000 logic gate capacity. (A logic gate is an elementary building block for a digital circuit)

For the current project, the chip will consist of between one to two million logic gates.

What's the status?

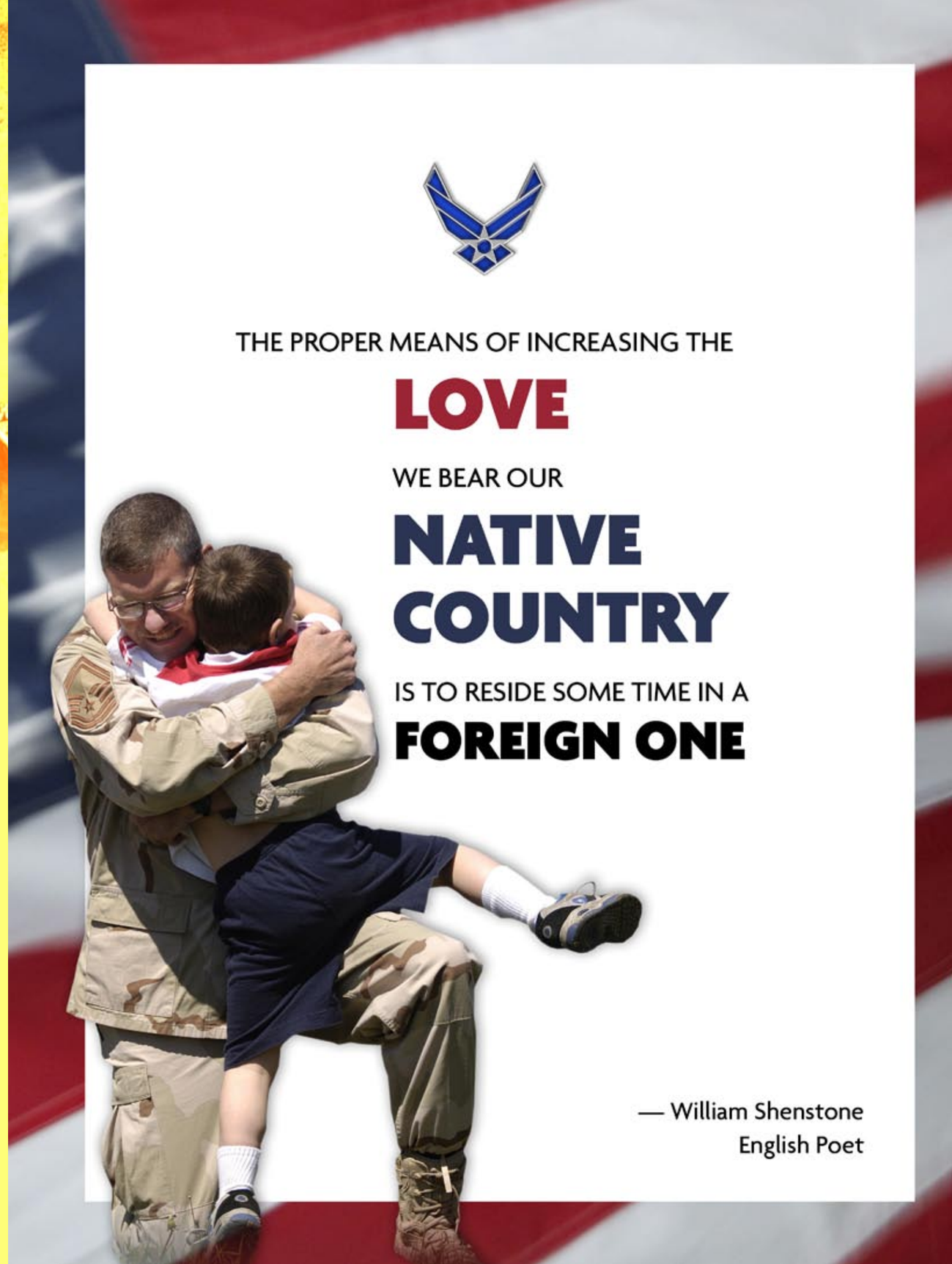
The Air Force is working to secure a new FPGA for use in Air Force spacecraft in the next two to three years. With $20 million in support from the Missile Defense Agency, the Air Force's Space and Missile Systems Center, NASA and AFRL, the program is working with designers to develop, and manufacture the latest radiation hardened adaptation.

Like its predecessor in the previous decade, the new and improved FPGA will eventually transition to the commercial market.

What's ahead?

The program's objective is to take commercially available electronic technology and modify it for military requirements. The project is on track technically to meet the Air Force's needs. With the high rate of technological changes occurring daily, the FPGA will likely get even smaller, but will still pack plenty of power.

Creigh Gordon, Field Programmable Gate Array program manager, Air Force Research Laboratory's Space Vehicles Directorate, holds a copy of the small, radiation-hardened computer chip used in the Mars Pathfinder mission in 1997. The FPGA Program is working with two contract companies to provide an updated version of the semiconductor device for use in the next generation of Air Force spacecraft.



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EMERGENCY RESPONSE ★ WRITING WELL ★ POSTAL

THE FUTURE OF CLIENT SUPPORT ★ SKILL TRAINING